

it has established business relationships.

(b) *Eligibility.* A Protégé:

(1) Must be a SDVOSB or VOSB as defined in 802.101;

(2) Must meet the size standard corresponding to the NAICS code that the Mentor prime contractor believes best describes the product or service being acquired by the subcontract; and

(c) Protégés may have multiple mentors. Protégés participating in mentor-protégé programs in addition to VA's Program should maintain a system for preparing separate reports of mentoring activity so that results of VA's Program can be reported separately from any other agency program.

(d) A protégé firm shall self-represent to a mentor firm that it meets the requirements set forth in paragraph (b) of this section. Mentors shall confirm eligibility by documenting the verified status of the protégé in the VetBiz.gov VIP database. Protégés must maintain verified status throughout the term of the Mentor-Protégé Agreement. Failure to do so shall result in cancellation of the Agreement.

819.7107 Selection of Protégé firms.

(a) Mentor firms will be solely responsible for selecting protégé firms. Mentors are encouraged to select from a broad base of SDVOSB or VOSB firms whose core competencies support VA's mission; and choose SDVOSB and/or VOSB protégés in addition to firms with whom they have established business relationships.

(b) Mentors may have multiple protégés. However, to preserve the integrity of the Program and assure the quality of developmental assistance provided to protégés, VA reserves the right to limit the total number of protégés participating under each mentor firm for the Mentor-Protégé Program.

(c) The selection of protégé firms by mentor firms may not be protested, except that any protest regarding the size or eligibility status of an entity selected by a mentor shall be handled in accordance with the FAR and SBA regulations.

819.7108 Application process.

(a) Firms interested in becoming approved mentor-protégé participants must submit a joint written VA Mentor-Protégé Agreement to the VA OSDBU for review and approval. The proposed Mentor-Protégé Agreement will be evaluated on the extent to which the mentor plans to provide developmental assistance. Evaluations will consider the nature and extent of technical and managerial support as well as any proposed financial assistance in the form of equity investment, loans, joint-venture, and traditional subcontracting support.

(b) The Mentor-Protégé Agreement must contain:

(1) Names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses (if available) of the mentor and protégé firm(s) and a point of contact for both mentor and protégé who will oversee the agreement;

(2) A statement from the protégé firm that the firm is currently eligible as a SDVOSB or VOSB to participate in VA's Mentor-Protégé Program;

(3) A description of the mentor's ability to provide developmental assistance to the protégé and the type of developmental assistance that will be provided, to include a description of the types and dollar amounts of subcontract work, if any, that may be awarded to the protégé firm;

(4) Duration of the Agreement, including rights and responsibilities of both parties (mentor and protégé), with bi-annual reviews;

(5) Termination procedures, including procedures for the parties' voluntary withdrawal from the Program. The Agreement shall require the mentor or the protégé to notify the other firm and VA OSDBU in writing at least 30 days in advance of its intent to voluntarily terminate the Agreement;

(6) A schedule with milestones for providing assistance;

(7) Criteria for evaluation of the protégé's developmental success;

(8) A plan addressing how the mentor will increase the quality of the protégé firm's technical capabilities and contracting and subcontracting opportunities;

(9) An estimate of the total cost of the planned mentoring assistance to be provided to the Protégé;

(10) An agreement by both parties to comply with the reporting requirements of 819.7113;

(11) A plan for accomplishing unfinished work should the Agreement be voluntarily cancelled;

(12) Other terms and conditions, as appropriate; and

(13) Signatures and date(s).

(c) The Agreement defines the relationship between the mentor and the protégé firms only. The Agreement does not create any privity of contract between the mentor and VA or the protégé and VA.

819.7109 VA review of application.

(a) VA OSDDBU will review the information to establish the mentor and protégé eligibility and to ensure that the information that is in VAAR 819.7108 is included. If the application relates to a specific contract, then OSDDBU will consult with the responsible contracting officer on the adequacy of the proposed Agreement, as appropriate. OSDDBU will complete its review no later than 30 calendar days after receipt of the application or after consultation with the contracting officer, whichever is later. There is no charge to apply for the Mentor-Protégé Program.

(b) After OSDDBU completes its review and provides written approval, the mentor may execute the Agreement and implement the developmental assistance as provided under the Agreement. OSDDBU will post a copy of the Mentor-Protégé Agreements to a VA Web site to be accessible to VA contracting officers for review for any VA contracts affected by the Agreement.

(c) If the application is disapproved, the mentor may provide additional information for reconsideration. OSDDBU will complete review of any supplemental material no later than 30 days after its receipt. Upon finding deficiencies that VA considers correctable, OSDDBU will notify the mentor and protégé and request correction of deficiencies to be provided within 15 days.

819.7110 Developmental assistance.

The forms of developmental assistance a mentor can provide to a protégé include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Guidance relating to—
 - (1) Financial management;
 - (2) Organizational management;
 - (3) Overall business management/ planning;
 - (4) Business development; and
 - (5) Technical assistance.
- (b) Loans.
- (c) Rent-free use of facilities and/or equipment.
- (d) Property.
- (e) Temporary assignment of personnel to a Protégé for training.
- (f) Any other types of permissible, mutually beneficial assistance.

819.7111 Obligations under the Mentor-Protégé Program.

(a) A mentor or protégé may voluntarily withdraw from the Program. However, in no event shall such withdrawal impact the contractual requirements under any prime contract with VA.

(b) Mentors and protégés shall submit reports to VA OSDDBU in accordance with 819.7113.

819.7112 Internal controls.

(a) OSDDBU will oversee the Program and will work cooperatively with relevant contracting officers to achieve Program objectives. OSDDBU will establish internal controls as checks and balances applicable to the Program. These controls will include:

- (1) Reviewing and evaluating mentor applications for validity of the provided information;
- (2) Reviewing bi-annual progress reports submitted by mentors and protégés on protégé development to measure protégé progress against the plan submitted in the approved Agreement;
- (3) Reviewing and evaluating financial reports and invoices submitted by the mentor to verify that VA is not charged by the mentor for providing developmental assistance to the protégé; and
- (4) Limiting the number of participants in the Mentor-Protégé Program within a reporting period, in order to